

Harvesting Hope Curriculum

Thank you for using this Harvesting Hope curriculum. It is hoped that this curriculum, which draws on many varied resources, will assist those who use it in examining and reflecting on farmworker issues in the United States, particularly in Southwest Florida. Specifically we invite your consideration of the issues from a faith perspective in a biblical context with the hope that such consideration will lift up the farmworkers and encourage involvement in social efforts to improve their working and living conditions.

The format of the curriculum is set up so that you have a variety of options to engage participants. The format of the curriculum is:

Prayer

Engaging Information

Biblical Discussion

Prayer

There is more than one option provided for engaging information and biblical discussion. Please read through the curriculum prior to your meeting and make sure that you have all the materials and know what would best engage your group.

Most of the materials needed for this curriculum can be found online or retrieved for free by contacting Interfaith Action of Southwest Florida (IA). To contact IA for materials email or call info@interfaithact.org / (239) 986- 9101 or (239)986-0688.

Enjoy your discussion and may the Spirit transform the hearts of all the participants.



Session One: What is the Problem? “Farmworker Conditions Today”

Objectives

- Learn working conditions for farmworkers in Florida
- Understand the connection between corporate purchase and the farmworkers wage
- Identify the impact of demeaning working conditions on the farmworker

Prayer

Engaging Information

Three options

- **Sweatshop Visioning Exercise/ PBS Documentary**
- **Bucket Exercise**
- **Facts and Figures on Florida Farmworkers**



Materials Needed

- PBS Now Documentary “The Battlefields” which is available from Interfaith Action of Southwest Florida at info@interfaithact.org
- A bucket or container without handles, filled with 32 lbs. of rice or beans
- Print copies of “Facts and Figures on Florida Farmworkers”: Includes facts on farmworkers sub-poverty wages and poor working conditions. (<http://www.interfaithact.org/sites/interfaithact.org/files/FarmworkerFactsandFigures10.pdf>)
- Bible

Sweatshop Visioning Exercise

- How many of you know what a sweatshop is? What kinds of things are made in sweatshops? [Clothes, shoes, basketballs etc.]
- What are some conditions you might find in sweatshops? [Low wages, dirty, no breaks, dangerous, etc.]
- Where do you find sweatshops? [China, El Salvador, Guatemala, etc.]
- If the U.S. is absent from participants’ answers, ask participants: Do you think it’s possible for sweatshops to exist in the United States? Why or why not?

We are going to watch a video now. Pay attention to see if you can identify any of the same conditions that we just associated with the sweatshops with what you are seeing in the video.

View the video, PBS Now “The Battlefields” (May 2005) [30 minutes]

Reflect on what you saw in the video. What sweatshop conditions that we discussed earlier can be applied to tomato pickers in the Florida fields?

When was the last time farmworkers had a real wage increase? [1978.]

Did food and clothing cost the same in 1978 as they cost today? [No, today they cost much more; discuss inflation.]

What does this mean for farmworkers? [Each year that they earn the same, their purchasing power actually goes down, meaning that they can afford less and less because the cost of living increases while their wages don't.]

They must pick 2.25 tons of tomatoes to earn the equivalent to minimum wage for a 10 hr work day, and that is simply not possible to do every day. Do you think it is fair to fill, haul, and lift over 4,000 pounds of tomatoes for just 60 dollars? Could you pay for food, rent, clothing, doctor visits, and other needs for yourself and your family on \$50 or \$60 a day?

What do farmworkers earn per bucket? [50 cents] How much of a raise are they asking for? [One more penny per pound of tomatoes.] What will this make their pay per bucket? [1 penny per pound in a 32-lb bucket= current 50 cents+ 32 cents = 82 cents.]

Why is the pay for this kind of work so low, despite how hard it is?

How do corporations exert a downward pressure on workers' wages?

Why did the farmworkers reach out to consumers and focus on Taco Bell?

Did the company respond immediately? What did the company say at first? [That they wouldn't "interfere."]

What did farmworkers and consumers do that led to the CIW's agreement with Taco Bell? [Wrote letters, prayed, peaceful mass marches and rallies, boycotted, kicked restaurants off campuses.]

Since the PBS documentary was made, eight other corporations have made agreements with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (McDonald's, Burger King, Subway, Whole Foods Market, Aramark, Soxexo, Bon Appetit and Compass Group). What are Taco Bell and these other companies working with the CIW to do? [Pay a penny per pound increase to farmworkers and establish a code of conduct to improve working conditions.]

Bucket Exercise

Give everyone in the group the opportunity to lift a bucket weighed down with 32 lbs of rice (what the bucket weighs when filled with tomatoes).

Caution: Be careful! 32 pounds is heavy. Make sure no one gets hurt.

Reflection: How did that feel? Imagine bending over to pick 32 pounds worth of tomatoes, carrying the bucket to the edge of the field, and then hoisting it on your shoulders to throw it up to

someone in the truck. Imagine having to do that over and over again in the hot Florida sun. Would you like to do this for just 50 cents each time?

Facts and Figures on Florida Farmworkers

(<http://www.interfaithact.org/sites/interfaithact.org/files/FarmworkerFactsandFigures10.pdf>)

Print and handout the above resource then read through the information and discuss the realities of Farmworkers today. What surprises you? What does not surprise you? Do these facts reflect the vision God has for his children?

Biblical Reflection

The following passages were chosen because they provide a foundation for discussion of the issues raised in this lesson. Many social issues seem to be discussed from an economic or political perspective rather than a biblical one. It is hoped that these passages will make that biblical discussion possible. Discussion leaders should feel free to revise the questions below or add questions of their own.

Read Deuteronomy 5:12-15

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AFTER READING THE SCRIPTURE

1. What do these verses, a portion of the Ten Commandments, reveal about God's vision for human community?
2. What does God's command requiring that children, beasts of burden, resident aliens and employees (slaves) be able to observe the Sabbath indicate about God's concern for even the least among us?
3. Besides mandating a day of rest, what other implications does such a requirement have for society?
4. What would you suggest needs to be done to improve the justice in a system that works to depress the wages of the employee while enhancing the wages (profits?) of the employer?

Read Matthew 20:1-16

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AFTER READING THE SCRIPTURE

1. What is your reaction to the parable?
2. How might this parable be useful in discussions of adequate payment for migrant labor?
3. The parable seems to advocate equal pay for unequal work. How would such a practice impact current systems?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-31

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AFTER READING THE SCRIPTURE.

1. This passage speaks of the importance of each part of the body to the whole body. How might that understanding influence discussions of migrant labor issues?
2. What about our economic assumptions gets in the way of our making changes to migrant pay?
3. What can the faith community do to advocate for improvement in paying migrants for their work?

Prayer



Session Two: How did we get here?

“Root Cause”

Objectives

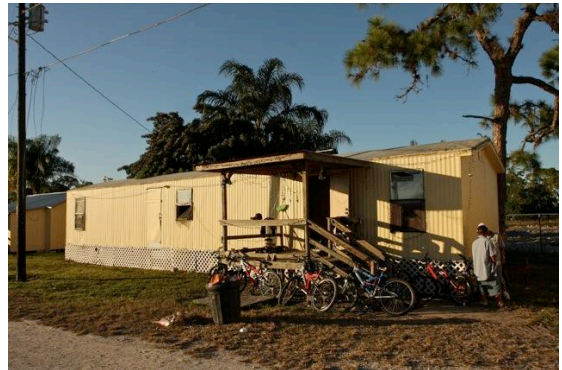
- Discover the root causes of poverty and poor working conditions for farmworkers
- Learn the foundations of modern day slavery
- Recognize how this situation is justified by those who benefit from it.

Prayer

Engaging Information

Three options

- **Slavery by Another Name (YouTube Video)**
- **Harvest of Shame Video**
- **Modern-Day Slavery**



Materials needed

- *Harvest of Shame* video: 20 minute clip of Edward R. Murrow’s powerful 1960 documentary that shows the plight of migrant farmworkers 50 years ago, and how those same conditions still exist today. Available from Interfaith Action of Southwest Florida at info@interfaithact.org
- Computer to play *Slavery by Another Name* – YouTube Video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCb4dcMkC5Q&feature=related>
- Print copies of “Slavery in the Fields and the Food We Eat”: Briefly describes the 9 slavery operations from Florida’s fields that have taken place over the past 13 years involving over 1,200 workers. <http://interfaithact.org/sites/interfaithact.org/files/SlaveryInTheFields10.pdf>
- Bible

Slavery by Another Name (YouTube Video)

Today we look at the foundations of our modern agricultural economy. Discussion should focus on the pressure for cheap labor and how that allows our society to tolerate the intolerable. We begin not in the fields of Immokalee, but in the post Civil War South.

Begin by viewing a 10 minute video, [Slavery by Another Name](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCb4dcMkC5Q&feature=related). It is available on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCb4dcMkC5Q&feature=related>. This is the first of a three part series of YouTube videos of Bill Moyers journal. The second and third parts of the series are similar in length and content. People may be encouraged to view them on their own; however, using all three in the class is not recommended because of time constraints.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AFTER VIEWING THE VIDEO.

Note: It will be very easy for the group to point fingers at industry or the old South, or someone else. We should not demonize an industry without acknowledging that the problem we face is much broader even systemic. We all benefit from cheap labor. We all look for lower prices in the marketplace.

1. In what ways did both North and South benefit from the situation described in the video?
2. Where do we see pressure for cheap labor in our current economy?
3. What role does the need for cheap labor play in immigration concerns?
4. Who benefits from a ready supply of cheap labor?
5. How does our dependence on cheap labor impact working conditions for farm workers?
6. What are some actions that might be taken by individuals or churches to address the situation?

“Harvest of Shame” (CBS, 1960)

Campaign for Fair Food Discussion Guide

Overview: Legendary journalist Edward R. Murrow's “Harvest of Shame” is among the most famous television documentaries of all time. Richly photographed and arrestingly poignant, this long-acclaimed exposé on the plight of migrant farmworkers aired the day after Thanksgiving in 1960 and resonated deeply for a nation unfamiliar with such brutally honest depictions of living conditions that, as Murrow remarks, “wrong the dignity of man.”

Half a century later, the Campaign for Fair Food is bringing fairer wages and more humane labor conditions to Florida's fields through a historic alliance of farmworkers, consumers, growers, and retail food industry leaders. While the transition to a more just Florida tomato industry is finally underway, much remains to be done to ensure a future of dignity and respect for the workers who plant and pick our nation's fruits and vegetables.

Directions: Screen the first twenty minutes of “Harvest of Shame.” Email info@interfaithact.org for a free DVD copy. Conclude with a group discussion about the films and Campaign for Fair Food.

Discussion Questions:

- What images did you find most striking in the film?
- What are the similarities and differences between migrant farm labor as depicted in “Harvest of Shame” and fifty years later?
- One grower in “Harvest of Shame” stated, “We used to own our slaves. Now we just rent them.” What does this reveal about the legacy of slavery in relation to migrant farm labor?
- In 1960, farmworkers earned \$900/year (\$6,567 adjusted to 2009 dollars). Why have annual earnings for farmworkers remained nearly stagnant over the past half-century?
- What are the root causes of farmworker poverty according to the CIW? What solutions to farmworker poverty stem from this analysis?

- What are some of the factors that spurred a transition from a predominantly African American to a Latin American and Caribbean immigrant workforce?
- How can consumers and farmworkers organize for a more just agricultural industry?
- What are ways that we can support the Campaign for Fair Food locally?

Modern-Day Slavery

The *Harvest of Shame* documentary gives a snapshot into the conditions Florida farmworkers face in the tomato fields and how farmworkers and consumers are changing these conditions by holding corporations accountable for how the food they sell is produced. But there is more to the story.

There are not only farmworkers who are exploited and do not earn enough money to support themselves and their families there are some farmworkers who are enslaved. These are men and women who are held against their will and forced to labor for little or no pay.

Modern-day slavery doesn't happen in a vacuum. It occurs in workplaces where people face poor working conditions and they lack the rights and power to change these conditions. So slavery in the fields is the extreme point on a continuum whose other end is the poverty wages and poor conditions faced by exploited workers in the fields. *[You may wish to draw a line. On one end write "Poor Wages. No Rights." On the other end write "Modern Day Slavery."]*

Invite participants to read several of the slavery case summaries from "Slavery in the Food We Eat" <http://interfaithact.org/sites/interfaithact.org/files/SlaveryInTheFields10.pdf> .

There are currently two more cases in court as of summer 2010 if you would like to include that information at this time see session four, engaging information, Human Trafficking on Area Farms in 2010.

The agreements that the Coalition of Immokalee Workers has created with nine major retail corporations all include a zero-tolerance policy for slavery. This policy is more than words. Following the most recent sentencing in a recent farmworker slavery case, growers who turned a blind eye to slavery in their fields lost business as corporations cut or suspended their contracts.

Farmworkers are exploited and even enslaved to bring cheap tomatoes not only to the grocery store, but to you and me. We are connected to the farmworkers who pick the tomatoes we purchase. The question for us is, what can we do about the poverty and abuses faced by the farmworker who picked it?

Biblical Reflection

These passages were selected because of their insistence that God sees people of faith as caring for and having responsibility for each other. As before, discussion leaders should feel free to revise the questions below or add questions of their own.

Read Genesis 4:1-9

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AFTER READING THE SCRIPTURE.

1. This passage addresses a situation of violence between brothers. How might it relate to the discussion of slavery in the fields?
2. What violence do we see at work in the enslavement of migrant laborers?
3. How do people justify such treatment of others?
4. Do you agree that the current system does violence to migrant workers? Why or why not?
5. What economic forces work against change in the current situation?
6. How might people of faith address those economic forces?

Read Leviticus 19:33-34

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AFTER READING THE SCRIPTURE.

1. What do these verses reveal about God's vision for human community?
2. Do you think migrant laborers (whether they are legal or not) are treated as equal citizens?
3. If we took this passage seriously, what changes would we have to make in our own lives?

Read Matthew 25:31-46

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AFTER READING THE SCRIPTURE.

1. What is the basis of God's judgment according to this parable?
2. What might this passage say to us regarding the treatment of migrant laborers?
3. If we took this passage seriously, what changes would we have to make in our own lives?

Prayer

Session Three: Why should I care? “My Connection to Farmworkers”

Objectives

- Explore Biblical portrayals of a just society
- Personalize the farmworker situation
- Understand the role of the consumer

Prayer

Engaging Information

Two options

- **Supermarket Video**
- **God’s Vision of a Fair World**



Materials Needed

- A computer to watch *One Penny More* – – YouTube Video
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VURs-rsi_KQ
- Bible

Supermarket Video

Watch the CIW’s 2 minute long “One Penny More” (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VURs-rsi_KQ). The video clearly shows the connection between supermarket consumers, and farmworkers in the fields.

Super Market Video Discussion:

- Based on the One Penny More Video, how can we explain the connection between consumers and farmworkers? What does this connection mean to you?
- What is the connection between the supermarket industry and farmworkers’ sub-poverty wages and poor working conditions?
- Reflect on why it is important for consumers and people of faith to join WITH farmworkers in the CIW’s Campaign for Fair Food. How can consumers influence the supermarket industry?

God’s Vision of a Fair World

Many hundreds of years ago, people were wondering about the kind of world that God wanted them to create. They saw the poorest people who planted and harvested food suffering. God spoke through the words of a prophet called Isaiah. Isaiah’s followers wrote down many visions

that described the sort of world God wanted. This is what they wrote:

“For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight. ¹⁹I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress. ²⁰No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime; for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed. ²¹They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²²They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. ²³They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord— and their descendants as well.” [Isaiah 65:17-23].

God’s vision of a world that is fair is a world where all people have what they need to thrive together. It’s a world where in all that we do, we consider how what we do affects others. And we make sure that we do not hurt others by the way we live.

How would you describe God’s vision for a new world? [Expect a range of answers such as hopeful, idealistic, impossible, sustaining; tease out answers from participants to explore their answer]

Why do you think God spoke this vision to people rather than just make it happen?

In your own life or in history, can you think of examples of where you’ve seen God’s vision for a world that is fair coming to pass?

Biblical Reflection

These passages were selected because of their claim that God owns the earth and has a vested interest in the future of all creation. Further, God’s interest in the future makes certain demands of the worshiping community. As before, discussion leaders should feel free to revise the questions below or add questions of their own.

Read Psalm 24

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AFTER READING THE SCRIPTURE.

1. The psalm claims that those who have clean hands and a pure heart are welcome in God’s holy places. Regarding migrant labor, what is required of us that we might have clean hands and pure hearts?
2. If God owns the earth, what role do humans play in caring for the earth?
3. What does that role require of us with regard to our companion workers in the fields?

Read Isaiah 58:1-9

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AFTER READING THE SCRIPTURE.

1. What is the people's complaint?
2. How does God answer their complaint?
3. How does the passage relate to our worship practice?
4. What does the passage call us to do?
5. With regard to the migrant laborer, what do you think the worshiping community might do?

Read Romans 12:1-18

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AFTER READING THE SCRIPTURE.

1. What might God's call that we not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds have to say to us regarding the treatment of migrant laborers?
2. Would you agree that our society encourages people to think of themselves more highly based on their education, or income, or position? Why or why not?
3. What do you think God is calling us to do with regard to how we view migrant laborers?
4. How might our actions toward them change if we took this passage to heart?

Prayer



Session Four: What can we do about it? “Striving for a New Reality”

Objectives

- Examine the Coalitions of Immokalee’s (CIW) current campaign
- Celebrate the accomplishments of the CIW
- Develop an action plan

Prayer

Engaging Information

Three options

- **Human Trafficking on area farms in 2010**
- **Celebrate CIW’s Accomplishments**
- **Join the CIW’s campaign**



Materials needed

(All Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) Campaign materials are available through info@interfaithact.org)

- Gainsville Sun Article “Three are Charged with Human Trafficking on Area Farms” found online <http://www.gainesville.com/article/20100707/ARTICLES/7071006>
- Florida Catholic Article “Woman recognized nationally for efforts to end slavery.”
- *Publix Manager Letters*: These letters ask Publix to join with the CIW and the Campaign for Fair Food. Individuals or groups are encouraged to deliver manager letters in person at any Publix store, and ask that the letter be passed on to Publix Corporate Headquarters.
- *Publix Post Cards*: Postcards are addressed to Ed Crenshaw, Publix CEO, and call on Publix to join with 9 other major food companies working with the CIW for fair wages and working conditions in the fields.
- *Publix Penny Folders*: Use the folder to collect pennies for Publix and pray that they might work with the CIW. Then, the week before Thanksgiving, deliver your penny folder to Publix along with the clear message, it is time for them to participate in the Campaign for Fair Food!
- Bible

Celebrate CIW’s Accomplishments

Read the Florida Catholic of Orlando article, July 2-15, 2010, titled “Woman recognized nationally for efforts to end slavery.”

A copy of the article should be provided, but it may be found online at:

[http://thefloridacatholic.org/iv/woman_recognized_nationally_for_efforts_to_end_slavery?searchPhrase=Woman_recognized_nationally](http://thefloridacatholic.org/iv/woman_recognized_nationally_for_efforts_to_end_slavery?searchPhrase=Woman+recognized+nationally)

Questions regarding the article:

1. What was Laura Germino recognized for doing?
2. Germino says "It became clear that slavery wasn't just an anomaly." What do you think she meant by that?
3. How does the article define human trafficking?
4. What is the TIP report?
5. What role has the coalition of Immokalee Workers played in raising awareness of the problem of human trafficking?
6. What are some ways the faith community can support the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in their campaign for fair food and humane treatment of workers?

Join the CIW's Campaign

After Taco Bell/Yum Brands, the CIW and consumers together successfully called on many other companies to also improve wages and conditions for farmworkers. These are McDonald's, Burger King, Subway, Whole Foods Market, Aramark, Soxexo, Bon Appetit and Compass Group, (food service providers). These are big accomplishments. But there is more to be done. Aside from Whole Foods Market, no other grocery chains have made an agreement with the farmworkers. We need to make sure that no matter where you buy a tomato – at the grocery store or on a hamburger at a restaurant, that the farmworkers who have picked the tomato are treated fairly. People across the country are calling on grocery stores in their neighborhoods to work with the farmworkers. Among the largest grocery chains in the nation are Kroger, Ahold and Publix. [If any of the following grocery stores are in your area, you can mention them.]

- Kroger owns stores with 32 different names: Kroger, Ralph's King Soopers, Food 4 Less, Fry's, Dillons, City Market, Fred Meyer, Smith's, Foods Co., Hilander, Jay C., Pay Less, Owen's, Scott's, Gerbes, and QFC.
- Ahold owns Stop & Shop, Giant, Martin's and Ukrop's stores, which are mostly in the Northeast and Mid- Atlantic.
- Publix is a supermarket located primarily in Florida, with other stores in the Southeast.

The Immokalee farmworkers and people across the country are asking these grocery chains to do the right thing and make sure that the farmworkers who pick the tomatoes that they sell are treated fairly. Unfortunately, these companies have not done so. As a result, people are sending postcards to the heads of these grocery stores. People are dropping off letters of concern to the managers of their local stores, calling on the company to make an agreement with the farmworkers just as other major companies have done. *[You can show an example of a postcard and a manager letter.]*

The Campaign for Fair Food is about making sure that the production and purchasing of food is done in a way that respects the human rights of farmworkers; in a way that makes sure that farmworkers are paid fairly and work in decent conditions.

Changing things that are wrong in our world so that they are fair is not easy. But neither is it impossible. What is impossible for one person to do alone becomes possible when we work together. We've already seen that farmworkers and people across the country have been able to convince nine major companies to improve pay and conditions for farmworkers. If we keep working together, one day soon when we purchase tomatoes, we will know that the farmworkers who have picked that tomato were paid and treated fairly.

Biblical Reflection

These passages were selected because of their recognition that people of faith live in the "real world" and are not always welcome as they carry out their faithful duties. As before, discussion leaders should feel free to revise the questions below or add questions of their own.

Read Nehemiah 2:17-20

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AFTER READING THE SCRIPTURE.

1. How did Nehemiah respond to the challenge of those who opposed the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls?
2. How might that inform people of faith in addressing justice issues regarding migrants in the fields?
3. What do you think God is calling us to do about the migrant laborers working conditions?
4. How shall we prepare ourselves to meet the opposition?

Read Luke 10:25-37

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AFTER READING THE SCRIPTURE.

7. What does this parable have to say about God's vision for being neighborly?
8. Who is our neighbor?
9. What might be involved in healing the wounds of the migrants and providing for their future care?
10. How might the faith community proceed to be the neighbor God calls us to be?

Read Matthew 6:7-14

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AFTER READING THE SCRIPTURE.

1. How does this prayer speak to the situation of the migrant laborer?
2. What role does the migrant play in God's provision of our daily bread?
3. What is God's will for the human community?
4. How are we people of faith living into the hope of that will?

Prayer